



CMLA Yatris Delight in Making Kailas Yatra

A 68 person group of Chinmaya Mission members and friends left over summer for the holy trek to Mt.Kailas and Lake Manasarovar. Swami Ishwarananda led the group which was blessed to be able to do the arduous three day parikrama of the holy mountain. The group which had members from all over the U.S. and India reveled in the darshans and the Siva Puja that was conducted by Swamiji on the banks of the holy Manasarovar.

Back at Rameshwaram, on Krishna Janmashtami day where celebrations to the Lord included bhajans in His name and the chanting of Vishnu Sahasranamam, Kailas pilgrims also gathered for the samaradhane, shared water from Manasarovar with all and enjoyed a short audio visual presentation on the yatra.



Teachers Attend Training Sessions

In September, the Balvihar Education Council held the annual teachers training in two sessions. Teachers and coordinators who had a break out session for addressing their specific issues, heard from both Acharyas who addressed what was needed in class, the idea of discipline and seva. The sessions were particularly useful for new teachers.



IL Devotees Enjoy Talk on Harmony

BY SINDUJA

Acharya Mahadevji addressed over 40 adults and children on Aug.10. in the Gurnee, IL area on how to live harmoniously with the world around us.

In his talk, he invoked the FISH principles that organizations adopted a few years ago to bring about joy in people's lives even while they were sweating and toiling in their work places.

The four principles are 1) To be present in whatever we do and emotionally connect with people in all interactions. 2) Make it a play. Do all things cheerfully in a playful manner, laughing and joking and not with a long face so that we feel light and not burdened. 3) To make someone's day. That is to serve others, similar to the Karma Yoga spirit of doing things that is given in the

Bhagwad Geeta. 4) To have a great attitude - the attitude of Gratitude.

He concluded with the fact that we need to incorporate the habits of scriptural study (Swadhyaya), Reflection (Mananam) & Meditation into our daily life to make sure that the "tuning with the world around us" would be complete.

Mahadevji engaged both adults and children in this lively and inspiring talk.

Swamiji Opens First Ganesh Festival in SoCal

The eleven-day Ganesh Festival 2013, rolled out at the Sanatan Dharma temple with drums, dance and meaningful speeches. The temple looked celebratory with tents and red carpets, when on Aug.30 organizers ushered in chief guest Swami Ishwarananda along with Reverend Sumana from the Buddhist Wat Thai Temple in North Hollywood and the Norwalk Mayor Luigi Vernola for the opening ceremony.

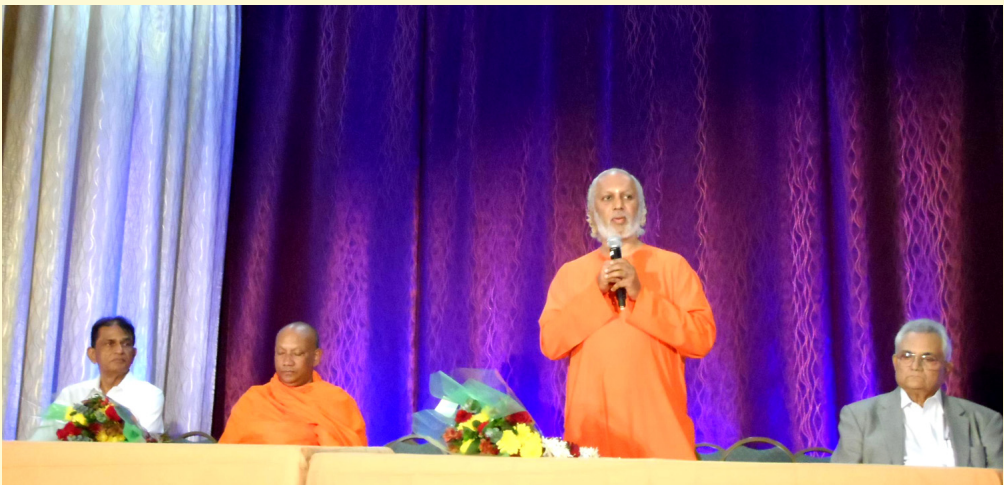
Accompanying the guests were Chairman of the temple Bhikhubhai Patel, who briefly welcomed those gathered and Natver Patel, trustee of the temple who made quick remarks through the program.

Rev. Sumana while pointing out that religion can bring people together but also divide, very simply reduced complex philosophy to its very essence: Open the heart wide, allow love, kindness and compassion to enter without condition, he said, and then watch the mind get free. There will be no suffering, there will be no distances and all will speak the same language.

The Buddhist monk in his talk also spoke of Indo-Thai connections, saying that his faith after all had roots in India. The largest idol of Lord Ganesha he said, was in Thailand where people propitiated the god for excellence in the arts and prosperity.

Swami Ishwarananda in his keynote, addressed the subject of "Divinity in Diversity." Quoting from the **Isavasya Upanishad**, Ganapati Atharvashirsha and other scriptures he made his central point: divinity is within each of us. We may seek peace and oneness by going to a temple, mosque or Buddhavihar, but it should never be forgotten that god is within each of us. If we can understand that this is common and binds us all, only then unity will be found. The external world only manifests itself in diversity, as that is its very nature.

Explaining his point through parables



and daily examples, he said Lord Ganesha specifically expresses the world of diversity and contradictions. For instance, his form is animal and god; the Lord is huge and his vehicle a tiny mouse. Similarly in the external world, none of us look the same, talk the same, no two flowers are alike and two leaves in a tree are different. Diversity, Swamiji said, creates conflict but the moment we discover what unites us and that we are all manifestations of the very lord himself, we realize oneness and there is love. He promised, "once you manifest love, that is what you draw toward yourself." Programs like the Ganesha Fest, he said, bring

to our attention what is inherent to us.

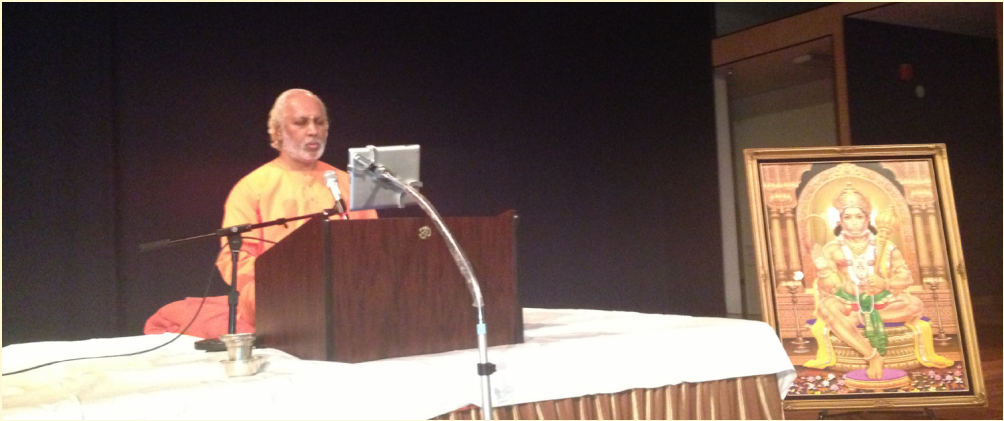
Apart from the talks, the small crowd that was present was treated to the sounds of Japanese Taiko drums which reverberated through the auditorium as a group of five drummers told the audience to "listen to the drums and feel the power within." There were also the gentle, swaying Thai dances where the performers dressed in colorful costumes brought a slice of their nation to the Hindu temple.

The Ganesh Fest was officially thrown open with the invocation "Gananam tva Ganapatigam" to Lord Ganesha by Swami Ishwarananda.

Ayodhya's Social Structure Elucidated in Valmiki Ramayan Lecture Series

After the summer break, the monthly lectures on the Valmiki Ramayana by Swami Ishwarananda continued. Speaking of the beauty of the itihasa as written by Sage Valmiki, Swamiji pointed out that he was the first litterateur, and in that sense all stories that followed were shaped by his thinking. In his lectures, Swamiji dwelt on length on the social structure of Ayodhya and the way it was interpreted made it relevant even today: what a welfare society is, the importance of an educated citizenry and the importance of class equality.

In Valmiki's time that was interpreted within the varna system and the sage while lauding the idyllic conditions of Ayodhya during Dasharathas time, says it was a place where the Kshatriyas followed the advice of the intellectuals and the thinkers, the Brahmins, while ruling



their kingdom; the Vaishyas followed the Kshatriyas while conducting business so that the rules of the nation, meant for the progress of all were not violated; and the Sudras followed the Vaishyas so that there were products that could be traded

by the merchant class, brought order and a place for all. It ensured importance for each class in the system. The next set of lectures will speak of the brilliant administrative apparatus in Ayodhya where all flourished.

Mahadevji Expounds on the Beauty of Lord Krishna

BY P.VAIDYANATHAN

The San Gabriel bal vihar hosted a spiritual talk "Krishna here, Krishna there, Krishna Krishna everywhere", by Acharya Mahadevanji on Aug. 25 at the beautiful hall of the Ashtalakshmi temple in North Hollywood.

In his talk Mahadevji highlighted the greatness of Lord Krishna, with the Chatusloki Bhagavatam as the emphasis.

Throughout the discourse, he emphasized the bhakti aspect. It was explained that when bhakti is integrated with knowledge it leads to moksha. The stories of Lord

Krishna as glorified in the Bhagavatam offer an ideal platform for developing the bhakti or devotional component. Every stage in the life of Lord Krishna, starting from childhood all the way till the end of the Mahabharata war, was filled with beauty and moral values. Merely by listening to these stories and reflecting on the Lord's actions, one gets elevated to a higher plane of thinking.

Mahadevji also discussed the ten topics contained in the Bhagavatam, and concluded with a brief overview of the main teachings of the Bhagavad Gita.

The main message from each of the 18 chapters of the Gita was succinctly explained. The importance of right thinking in this context was also emphasized. With such an approach the Gita can help us to develop a pure mind which is conducive to higher contemplation. The role of the Gita in daily life (management of anger, greed, and desire) was also highlighted, in addition to its role in the realization of the supreme goal of attaining liberation.

Mahadevji interspersed his lecture with delightful songs.